

Message Text

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60

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5670

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, EAIR, BE

SUBJECT: VANDEN BOEYNANTS' LETTER TO RUMSFELD DATED 21 NOV 75

1. WE HAVE TALKED WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMICS ABOUT THE BACKGROUND AND INTENT OF VANDEN BOEYNANTS' LETTER OF 21 NOV 72, TO SECRETARY RUMSFELD. ACCORDING TO THESE OFFICIALS, THE MAIN PURPOSES OF VANDEN BOEYNANTS' LETTER WERE:

(1) TO ACQUAINT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RUMSFELD WITH VANDEN BOEYNANTS' INTERPRETATION OF THE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN HIM AND FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SCHLESINGER;

(2) TO ESTABLISH A PERSONAL WORKING RELATIONSHIP CONCERNING F-16 AND OTHER MILITARY MATTERS BETWEEN VANDEN BOEYNANTS AND SECRETARY RUMSFELD;

(3) TO CALL ATTENTION TO WHAT APPEARS TO THE BELGIANS AS A SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN MAN-HOURS OF WORK FOR BELGIAN INDUSTRY AND TO REGISTER OTHER SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS.

2. COMMENT. EMBASSY BELIEVES ANOTHER IMPORTANT PURPOSE OF THE LETTER WAS TO PUT VANDEN BOEYNANTS IN A POSITION TO DEFEND HIMSELF POLITICALLY IF THERE ARE PERSISTENT DIFFICULTIES

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FROM BELGIAN INDUSTRY AFTER THE CONTRACTS ARE SIGNED.

IN OUR VIEW, VANDEN BOEYNANTS' LETTER CONTAINS A FAIRLY
ARBITRARY COLLECTION OF COMPLAINTS AND POTENTIAL PROBLEMS.
NONETHELESS, THEY SHOULD BE TREATED SERIOUSLY. WE SHOULD USE
THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE US OVERALL COMMITMENT TO THE F-16
CONSORTIUM AND OUR INTENTION TO MEET THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS
IMPORTANT PROGRAM. END COMMENT RENNER

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